DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 129 765 SP 010 480

AUTHOR Fowler, John S.
TITLE Movement Education-Past-Present-Future.
PUB DATE Apr 75
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the California Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation State Convention (Sacramento, California, April 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Athletic Programs; Dance; Educational History; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Individualized Instruction; *Physical Education; Physical Recreation Programs; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS England; *Movement Education

ABSTRACT

Physical education in England at the secondary school level was dominated in the 1950's by a formal, disciplinary method of teaching known as the "Swedish Drill," developed from the remedial gymnastics of P. H. Ling. However, at the elementary education level, a change towards informality, discovery learning, learning environments, and individualized instruction was beginning to develop in music, art, and physical education. Known as "Movement Education' (ME), it was introduced into England in the thirties by Rudolph Labun as Modern Education Dance, mainly to women physical education and dance teachers. Resistance to the new ideas by male teachers existed because of the links to dance, women teachers, and women's physical education colleges. Gradually, attitudes changed and now, in the seventies, it is acknowledged that movement education can be presented as a total approach to physical education. Arguments still persist, but present approaches in physical education teaching stress respect for individual differences, individualized instruction, and problem-solving experiences. Much remains to be done in the fields of games, play, and theories of learning and teaching. The major goal should be to encourage children to become feeling, sharing, concerned individuals with a sense of worth, self-direction, and knowledge of what is essential to their survival. (MB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED129765

MOVEMENT EDUCATION—Past-Present-Future.

John S. Fowler

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SP010 480

MOVEMENT EDUCATION - PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

Address presentation by Dr. John S. Fowler at a workshop for Physical Education teachers organized in conjunction with the California Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation State Convention - Sacramento, April 1975.

As a young teacher in England some twenty five years ago I was involved in teaching physical education at a time when one used what was called the "1933 Syllabus". This publication was a government sponsored manual of physical training for use in schools. Basically the book consisted of daily tables or lesson plans, together with some philosophical and theoretical material which provided a rationale for the program. Lessons were organized in such a way that anatomically all parts of the body were exercised. One began at the head, through arms and shoulders, trunk, legs included strengthening exercises for the lateral, abdominal and dorsal muscle groups and usually finished with a breathing exercise. There was also place in the lessons for some games, relays and rhythms. A well taught and planned lesson covered all joints and muscles.

The method of teaching was the 'command' style of as it was frequently known, "Swedish Drill!" This latter term was used because the basic ideas of the program had grown out of the remedial gymnastics imported from Sweden which had been developed in part by P.H. Ling. In addition the influence on teaching of the instructors around the turn of the century was clearly evident, many of these instructors had been ex army non-commissioned officers and were often regarded as unwelcome guests on teaching staffs. Physical education at least in England had to live with this feeling of inferior status for a long time. The way the subject was taught and because of the people who taught it also produced a mind-body split. Minds were education in the classrooms and bodies were drilled in the gymnasium.

Looking back over the years one incident stands out which I can clearly recall as being a turning point for me and the way I taught physical education. I was working as Head of Department in a high school (7-12) in 1956 and was visited by one of the County Organizers of Physical Education. My classes were models of discipline and control. Teams lined up to wait for their turn on a piece of apparatus, nobody moved until I said so. I had never questioned this approach to teaching and thought everything was going fine until the organizer said something about I should go and see some Movement Education! What, I wondered is Movement Education? Immediately I became very defensive and wondered if there was something wrong with my program or the way I taught.

One day the organizer took me to visit some elementary schools where 'Movement' was being taught and again the scene was impressed on my mind. The whole experience was demoralizing, children appeared to be all over the floor, climbing the stall bars and all appeared to be doing different things! How could a teacher possibly control this apparent chaos? How did the teacher even really know what was going on? I went back to my school rather discouraged and feeling very uncertain about what now was expected in terms of these new developments.

Looking at the rest of elementary education during the late 40's and 50's it was beginning to be obvious that in certain parts of the country some things were beginning to change. These changes were especially apparent at first in physical education, music and art. Later mathematics and science and other curriculum areas began to change. The move was towards informality, discovery learning, the provision of richer learning environments, integrated days and the idea of learning centers. By no means was this a rapid and massive change in all schools. It was a very gradual development led by pioneering teachers and administrators in many different area of England.

Part of the move towards a fresher approach in physical education was due to the impact of the work and ideas of Rudolf Labun. Labun came to England from Equope in the mid thirties and had been deeply involved in many aspects of performing and observing movement in dance, in the theater and in industry. He taught workshops in what became known as Modern Education Dance which caught on well with groups of women physical education and dance teachers in England. I do not have time today to go into Laban's contribution to physical education. Thornton has provided some interesting material in his book. McIntosh in his "Physical Education in England since 1800" also provides some description of the development and changes taking place.

Laban proposed a different way of describing or analyzing movement, the terms used I am sure are becoming familiar to many of you as Movement Education is discussed or described in the literature and at classes and workshops.

Initially the qualities of time, weight, space and flow were applied in the main to dance. Gradually physical educators took them and applied them to all of the components of a typical elementary school curriculum, to things such as gymnastics, ball skills, small apparatus and so on.

At the same time in England another interesting development was taking place in the Elementary School. All kinds of innovative, challenging and in the main portable pieces of climbing equipment was being developed in the schools. Different countries produced their own kinds of equipment and we had the Esser apparatus, the Bristol, Southhmapton and so on. McIntosh reports that this was a direct result of wartime obstacle courses used by the military being modified and altered for use, surprisingly I felt in elementary school programs.

Men physical education teachers were initially very skeptical of the new ideas, partly because of the connotations of the connection with dance and partly because it was mainly women teachers and the women's physical education colleges that were developing things.

For several years in England there was and still is I suppose arguments over the merits of the adoption the movement education approach by teachers. I attended many conferences and workshops on the movement approach, sometimes it was called Basic Movement, Movement Training or even Educational Gymnastics. Claims were made that this new approach which utilized the ideas of Laban and the new forms of apparatus would provide a solid base after which students would be better able to learn all later sports skills. Letters appeared in the Journals with headings such as "To Move or not to Move!" and one writer even described armed camps each convinced the other "side" was wrong in terms of staying with traditional methods or adopting some of the newer ideas.

On top of all of these factors the idea of discovery learning or problem solving was now being applied to physical education. Liselot Diem in Germany had produced a delightful little book entitled "Who Can?" which supported the notion of questioning students instead of telling or showing how.

It wasn't until I took a look around at what was happening in the rest of elementary education that I really began to look more critically at what I was doing, and felt that perhaps things ought to be changed. Children perhaps didn't have any opportunity to make choices, explore different ways of moving, discover something of their own limitations under the approach I was using. However it took me a long time to feel comfortable with a different approach and at times I felt very unhappy with the results.

Gradually, however things began to go better and the children certainly enjoyed things and became more interested in the program than ever before.

I say it took me a long time to begin to change my teaching style because teachers often go to a Saturday morning workshop and then expect miracles to happen on Monday morning. Change in behavior generally should take place slowly. One should talk in terms of months or even years as new ideas are tried out and carefully evaluated. Frequently new ideas are dropped because they didn't work out within three weeks or so! Persistence in my case certainly paid off, and I realized that my changing method of teaching was much more in line with the way changes were taking place in the classroom. My teaching became more conversational in manner and reinforcement came from the then current spokesman for the "Movement". Alec Clegg, Diana Jordan, Bill Grier and Harry Scott among others in the West Riding of Yorkshire who were ardent supporters and stressed that finding out was better than being told or that lighting fires was more desirable than filling pots.

There was little in print to help teachers much of the ideas being developed by particular people who then were encouraged to share their work with others through conferences and workshops. Laben's books were not particularly easy to read and the government books which replaced the 1933 syllabus (Moving and Growing and Planning the Program) gave only a slight indication of other ways in which teaching might develop. More literature became available in the late fifties and early sixties. Anglo-American workshops were also held and many American teachers and college people visited various areas in England and exchanged ideas concerning Movement Education.

Developments in the movement area were also taking place in this country, and again teachers and college people in physical education and dance were beginning to build themes, rationales and practical programs. People such as Allenbaugh, Barrelt, Gilliam, Logsdon, Porter, Stanley, Tillotson, Young, through the written and spoken word were disseminating their ideas. Text books dealing with Elementary School Physical Education began to acknowledge all but briefly in a very token sort of way the movement approach suggested it was something we did for a 3 week unit! Terminology was mixed and one read and still reads of Movement Exploration, Movement Education, Basic Movement and their being used interchangeably and yet meaning the same thing. Slogans such as moving to Learn and Learning to Move represented attempts to present the underlying assumed relationship between movement, learning, teaching and the student.

It has not really been until the 1970's that we have really seen attempts to present or acknowledge Movement Education and all it implies as a total approach to physical education. More after it has usually been seen as something for the primary grades and then only for basic skills, small apparatus and dance.

Arguments still persist concerning the relative merits of the "traditional" approach versus "problem solving" and the results of experiments to prove which is the best way generally have not proved either 'method' to be superior. These studies usually do not show any significant differences in what children have learned. The true differences probably are submerged in a host of other experimental variables. The fact is that most teachers do not strictly adopt one style or teaching, but shift about along the spectrum which Mosston describes as lying between command and discovery.

The problem solving approach and what is called the Inquiry Method in education has received much support from contemporary writers in education. Silberman, Postman, Weingartner, Holt, Leonard to name but a few have been strong in their feelings and recommendations for discovery learning.

With regard to current attempts to move towards individualized instruction, movement educators have suggested that their method allows children to make choices, provides success experiences, encourages self-direction, self discipline, self esteem and self concept. Interest is promoted and this is in itself a strong motivation toward learning. The thrust tends to be away from formalized, games-skill centered programs; away from a competitive and team sports oriented program towards a climate in which the child is free to explore, discover, without fear of teacher recrimination or threat. Children can be working on many different answers to challenges or tests posed by the teacher so everyone is not doing the same thing at the same time or doing a set number of exercises. True individualization has not really been fully achieved. The teacher still tends to be center-stage in the sense of providing the stimuli in tasks which children work on. Many opportunities are provided for small group activities and individual solutions to the task or problem at hand.

Singer and Dick in a recent book indicate that the present approach in physical education does emphasize concerns with respect to individual differences, individualized instruction and the encouragement of problem solving experiences.

Movement education teachers have moved physical education much more than other approaches into the cognitive and affective domains. They have been teaching 'why' as well as "how" in activity.

Beyond that, Angell writing in JOHPER said that the "more important outcomes of physical education should be personal identity, human worth, beauty, sensitivity, joy of learning and the art of communication! Physical education continues Angell's self-education discovery of self and one's unlimited capacity to express love, beauty, freedom, discipline and meaning."

As to the future of Movement Education I feel we are in a way still only at the beginning of further developments particularly in the area of games, play and theories of teaching and learning. Critics of Movement Education including Locke and Siedentop have suggested that the approach has "enjoyed honeymoon status" and will not produce the millenium in physical education. Theoretical under pinnings are being tightened, and developed.

Much of the recent literature in physical education has moved into discussions and dialogue between the behaviorists and the humanists (Siedentop, Heitmann & Kneer, Hellison) and also the development of systems approaches to instruction and information processing models. Some writers even go as far as to say that in the elementary school particularly it is not so much what we teach but how we teach it that is the important thing. Instructional systems are being carefully analyzed and curriculum being presented. Movement Education has still not been tried by many teachers at the elementary school level and yet in certain quarters one feels it has been dismissed as old hat.

Each of us has to try all things and hold fast to that which is good and seems to fit our philosophy. Teachers do need to be flexible and often to new ideas. It is unlikely that there ever will be one best way to teach for all children. One has to be able to utilize different strategies for different children.

I feel that the Movement Education approach is still developing and we shall see more utilization at the secondary level. Environments for our subject at the elementary school level need to be made richer and more challenging. Approach will develop built around concepts. Only quite recently are we beginning to develop a science of

education as McKenna puts in a recent issue of Phi Delta Kappa (Feb. 1976) "the tyranny of howness has led to blind repetition, mindless reductionism and senseless competition."

Questions of who, why, when, whether, what, how and where are equally important and interrelated. Thus it is time for the scholars and writers among us to begin the task (and it is happening) of clarifying goals, operations and outcomes not only for the student but also for the teacher. Very often the best methods are the most difficult and one of the myths that have developed with Movement Education is that it is easy to teach and anyone can do it. I believe it is an approach that demands the teacher have insights into really knowing children - how they grow, learn and develop, knowing our subject field and combining all of this simultaneously into the art and science of teaching. Our major goal should be to encourage children to become feeling, sharing concerned individuals who have learned how to learn, have acquired a sense of individual worth and self direction and appear to know what is essential to their own survival.

REFERENCES

Angell, George - "Physical Education and the New Breed" - Washington, D.C. J.O.H.P.E.R. June 1969

Barrett, K. and P. Tanner - "Movement Education: What Does it Mean" - Washington, D.C. JOPER - April 1975

Diem, Liselot - Who Can (3rd Ed) Frankfort, Germany - Wilhelm Limpert, 1957

Gilliom, B.C. - Basic Movement Education for Children - Reading, Massachusetts - Addison-Wesley 1970

Heitman, Helen M. and E. M. Kneer - Physical Education Instructional Technique - Englewood Cliffs, N.J. - Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1976

Hellison, Donald - Humanistic Physical Education - Englewood Cliffs, N.J. - Prentice Hall, 1973

Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Moving and Growing - London, England 1952

_____. Planning the Programme, London, England 1953

His Majesty's Stationery Office. Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools - London, England 1933

Holt, John. How Children Fail - New York - Delta Publishing Co., 1965

_____. How Children Learn - New York - Pitman Publishing Company 1969

Leonard, George - The Ultimate Athlete - New York - Viking Press - 1975

McIntosh, Peter. Physical Education in England Since 1800. London, G. Bell & Sons, Ltd. 1968

Mosston, Muska. Teaching Physical Education: From Command to Discovery - Columbus, Ohio - Charles E. Merrill, 1966

Postman, N. and C. Weingartner. Teaching as a Subversive Activity - New York - Delacorte Press, 1969

Siedentop, Daryl. Physical Education: Introductory Analysis - Dubuque, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown, 1972

Silberman, Charles. Crisis in the Classroom - New York - Random House, 1970

Singer, R. and W. Dick. Teaching Physical Education: A Systems Approach. Boston - Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

Stanley, Sheila. Physical Education: A Movement Orientation - Toronto. McGraw Hill 1969

Sweeney, R.T. (ed.) Selected Readings in Movement Education - Reading, Mass. Addison-Wesley 1970

Thornton, S. Laban's Theory of Movement - Boston. Plays, Inc. 1971

MOVEMENT EDUCATION - PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

John S. Fowler

Abstract: This paper traces some of the experiences of the writer during the early beginning of movement education in England. Later developments in the United States are discussed and implications are suggested for continued growth.